

The Negro Girl

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I DO not wish to prey too heavily upon your sympathy by giving you an overdrawn picture of the Negro girl.

I shall try to be fair and impartial in stating the facts.

For two hundred and fifty years the Negro girl, who did not force herself upon the American people, but who was invited to come here and make this her home, and who has helped to make America what it is today, was forced to leave her babe in the cabin while she hurried to the "big house" to take care of the babe of her mistress.

She was made to see the importance of the regular bath, fresh air, sunshine and many other things conducive to health for the white child, and was not given time to do these things for her own child.

Do you wonder then that the Negro babe developed physical rickets, moral rickets and every other sort of rickets?

The Negro girl was not allowed to follow the dictates of her own heart, but was given a new husband whenever her master saw that he could, with financial gain, sell her husband, the father of her children. Are you surprised that with such an inheritance the Negro girl is not free indeed? Are you surprised that she is not perfect?

Do you realize that freedom is not a thing that comes altogether with a proclamation, but that freedom comes with development? Fifty

years is but a day, as it were, in the development of a race.

The Negro girl asks that you do not judge her from newspaper accounts, because she never gets newspaper notoriety except when she oversteps the moral or civil law. Cognizance is never taken of her efforts to obtain an education, of her church work, social service work, or her strenuous efforts to rise above present conditions. If it takes kindness, patience, sympathy, love, to help the Indian, Japanese, Mexican, and Alaskan, the same kind of kindness, patience, sympathy and love will help the Negro girl.

It matters not how thorough her education has been, she cannot be a competitor with the white girl. Efficiency does not count in the South when the Negro girl is concerned. The Negro girl who has been well trained and who is quick and accurate with figures must stand at the counter, while the white girl oftentimes has to use her fingers in counting the amount of her purchases.

The Negro girl's father has not had time or money to establish business enterprises or to open up avenues of employment for his daughter. He is struggling to get a home and to educate his children. He worked hard for two hundred and fifty years to make the South the Eden that it is and now he must pay a fabulous price for a home for himself.

The Negro girl does not need your pity, or any patronizing courtesy, but she asks that you give her a chance. Give her a chance equal to that offered to the foreign girl who has but recently come to America.

The Negro girl who cooks your food, washes your clothes, or pushes your baby cart, is not the

scum of the earth. She has been created in God's image and represents one of His great races.

Since you must become pro-Japanese, or pro-Indian to help the Japanese or the Indian, you must be pro-Negro to help him.

In the city of Charleston, S. C., the Negro girl is not allowed to teach in the public schools provided for her own people. These schools are taught by Southern white women because freeing of the slaves made them poor. Their fathers' wealth consisted of slaves.

In another town in the state Negro boys are afraid to attempt to keep company with the attractive Negro girl. On several occasions the boys have been told by white men that they would be thrashed and made to leave the town if they persisted.

Oh, what a conflict for the Negro girl with the white vulture on one side and the black rascal on the other!

The Negro girl who lives in the remote country district and labors patiently, helping to make and gather the crop, is much to be pitied because she has not more than a three months' school in her district. When her mistakes carry her into the courts she is not tried as a girl, but as a Negro girl. She has no Rescue Home, no Salvation Army, no Door of Hope Home to shield her, or to inspire her to be a better girl, or to help her out of her present difficulty.

The Negro girl lifts her voice in praise to God for the great Methodist Episcopal Church, for her Freedman's Aid Schools, for the Woman's Home Missionary Society Schools and Industrial Homes, for the women of the church who heard her cry years ago and, because God had given

them vision, unflinchingly went to her rescue. Go right on, don't stop to ask, "Does it pay?"

Every Negro girl does not make good, but do one hundred per cent. of anybody's girls make good? Hundreds of girls who have been trained in the schools of the Woman's Home Missionary Society are filling positions of trust and honor, many are teaching in their own home schools—leading the people out into the sunlight of God, making the desert to blossom as the rose. Because you have taught her to accept Christ as her personal Saviour, you have taught her to be strong. You have taught her that the life that counts must toil and fight; the life that counts must be one of service.

The Negro girl is debtor to the Woman's Home Missionary Society for her schools and Industrial Homes, which stand out as beacon lights in the towns and cities of the South.

Help the Negro girl so that she may be able to look at the Stars and Stripes and know that they mean freedom, protection, to her. Help her to sing sincerely.

"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing."

Woman's Home Missionary Society
Methodist Episcopal Church
150 Fifth Avenue, New York City

50 or less, 6c; 50 to 100, 10c